

destabilization? The answer, Schenk argues, is that it did both. Reformers and their allies in the press viewed the railways as instruments of modernization that would stabilize the empire's social structures under the aegis of the state. Government planners saw the railways as the key to a future integrated empire in which mobility, commerce and travel would overcome traditional divisions of territory and development and would serve to export the civilizing culture of the metropole to the imperial periphery. Indeed, the railway network "opened up the possibility of experiencing the continental empire as an integrated political and economic space" (383). This new geographical awareness was promoted not only by travel but also by a plethora of new spatial images in railway maps, travel guides and popular journalism.

And yet as Schenk shows, the geographical mobility and the cultural confrontations associated with the mixing of diverse social and regional identities throughout the Empire often promoted ideas of difference rather than unity, encouraging fears of the erosion of social boundaries and hierarchies. Railway stations crammed with rustic markets and thousands of impoverished and deracinated peasants appeared proof that the metropole was now succumbing to the influence of provincial and backward Russia. The construction of railways promoted economic growth and social change in certain regions while consigning others to an economic and social oblivion that underlined the very uneven nature of Russia's development. Schenk also shows how the railways demonstrated not only the power of the autocrat but also his vulnerability both to terrorist attacks (Narodnaia Volia bombed the Emperor's train in 1879) and to railway accidents (a devastating train crash in 1888 almost saw off the imperial family). In response to heightened anxieties over their safety, Alexander III and Nicholas II used the railways as a vehicle for the performance of imperial power far less than had Alexander II and, as a result, the social distance between rulers and ruled paradoxically increased rather than contracted during their reigns.

Russia's Journey into the Modern Age is a richly textured account of the paradoxical impact of railway expansion in late imperial Russia. Rail travel destabilized and unsettled the empire just as it bound the empire more tightly together. This nuanced and innovative study deserves the widest possible readership.

DANIEL BEER
University of London

Zhenshchiny v evangel' skikh obshchinakh poslevoennogo SSSR, 1940–1980-e gg.:

Issledovanie i istochniki. By Miriam Dobson and Nadezhda Beliakova. Moscow: Indrik, 2015. 510 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Plates. Photographs. Figures. Tables. Maps. \$25.00, hard bound.

Women outnumbered men, often dramatically so, in religious communities in the Soviet Union, a fact noted with derision in state antireligious propaganda. Recognizing the centrality of women in sustaining and shaping the Soviet evangelical experience, this volume documents and analyzes the contributions and the multifaceted roles of women in evangelical communities. Women have too often been either lost in the historical record, or accorded purely domestic roles. Dobson and Beliakova demonstrate that women actively participated in vital functions both in the family and the church, and also that they assumed public roles in order to protect their families and their faith communities.

The work begins with an overview of evangelical life in the Soviet Union, and some general observations about the nature of women's roles in evangelical

communities. The remainder of the book is organized thematically into seven chapters, each with a brief introduction followed by a series of primary sources. The scope of these materials is impressive: they span the postwar period and geographic locations across the Soviet Union, and include both Baptists and Pentecostals, as well as registered and unregistered communities. Moreover, they allow for a variety of perspectives, given that they encompass court proceedings, petitions from believers, internal church records, and many other materials gleaned from various archives. Perhaps the most valuable documents are a series of oral history interviews conducted by both authors. This reader wishes that the volume had given more space to these materials, which are only briefly excerpted, as they shed light not only on what female evangelicals experienced in the Soviet period, but how they have integrated this past into their post-Soviet worldview.

With many men imprisoned or unable to work due to job discrimination, evangelical women often carried primary responsibility for their family's survival, which was made more difficult given the large size of many evangelical families. Moreover, with women assigned the task of raising their children, sometimes alone, they were also the central force in passing along the faith to the next generation. Numerous documents in this volume demonstrate women's leadership roles in youth groups, Sunday schools, and summer camps. While the state may have targeted men for imprisonment, it also arrested women who refused to let the state dictate how they should raise their children. Indeed, what comes across in much of this volume is women's eloquent defense of their autonomy as mothers and citizens against state interference and the forced imposition of what they saw as a corrupt, secular culture.

Yet women's involvement in advocacy for their faith reached far beyond the home or the school. This is arguably the most important conclusion reached by Dobson and Beliakova, who clearly show how women organized to defend their rights, and publicly protested state repression. This included involvement in international campaigns to pressure the state to respect its own laws and treaty obligations on religious freedom and human rights. The longest section of the book deals with the activity of the Council of Relatives of Imprisoned Christian Baptists.

Overall, the document collection gives voice to the diverse perspective of women in evangelical communities. Indeed, post-Soviet publications from within these communities have tended to downplay women's assumption of leadership positions, viewing it as an unfortunate, temporary necessity due to the dearth of men. This interpretation is shared by some of the interviewed women. The documents also explore the positive features of evangelicalism that drew women to the faith despite the enormous social costs, offering a dynamic counter narrative to Soviet sources, which tended to suggest that unscrupulous fanatics ensnared vulnerable and gullible women through fear and false promises.

This work is a valuable contribution to scholarship on postwar religious life, and a convincing argument for the need for greater study of religious women as leaders, organizers, and advocates. As is bound to happen with a document collection of such broad scope, some topics receive more attention than others. Although the authors should be given credit for including a few documents that address the fate of women who left the faith, this often neglected subject could benefit from further analysis given that it allows for a balanced understanding of how membership in evangelical communities both provided opportunities and constrained choices for Soviet women. An English translation of these documents, especially the oral history interviews, would be a wonderful teaching resource.

EMILY B. BARAN
Middle Tennessee State University